



# The Messenger

“ST. MATTHEW’S CHURCH: A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLES”

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## 9 Secrets Pastors Keep by Mandy Smith

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As a pastor, every Sunday they stand in front of us, telling funny stories and explaining important principles. As we watch you listening, reassuring, and welcoming, it’s easy for us to assume you have it all together. Some of us see a little behind the scenes, but few of us really know you. And few of you really feel known.

This is partly because the work of a pastor is unlike any other work. It is avocation, a calling upon the whole life, requiring complete engagement. Even when resting, it has something to do with the work. And while they are working, they do a huge amount of resting in God.

The role of a pastor shouldn’t be entered into lightly. David Hansen, author of *The Art of Pastoring*, knew being a pastor was an “impossible” task for him, so his prayer was, “Lord, being a pastor is impossible, so if you will be with me all the way to help me, I will be a pastor.” But unlike Hansen, many pastors don’t realize how impossible their work is until they’re deep into it.

Even the most transparent pastor knows that it’s inappropriate to share themselves fully. But when they do share in a healthy way, some things still remain theirs alone to carry. As a result, pastors often feel lonely.

In an effort to break through that pastoral loneliness, I’ve asked various pastors to share behind the scenes of their lives and work. Here are some things they said they’re not telling their church members.

### 1. We Feel Pressure to Live up to Your Expectations

Pastors shared that they often feel the presence of previous pastors hovering over their work. “The greatest challenge was dealing with the church’s expectations for their pastor. Churches usually don’t look for the unique gifts and strengths of their current pastor. Instead, they take the top strengths of the last two to three pastors, combined and expect the current pastor to excel in those areas.

### 2. It’s Hard to Tell You What You Need to Hear

Other pastors feel torn between their perceived obligation to keep people happy and their biblical calling to voice godly challenge; “I think every pastor deals with the balancing act of being both pastoral and prophetic. We love people with such a whole heart that pointing out things that need to change can be difficult.”

### 3. We Put a Lot of Pressure on Ourselves

Many churches place high expectations on their pastors, not realizing the many expectations and pressures pastors also have of themselves. “We have an image, or a hope, of what the church could be. When the church responds with apathy or anxiety, that can feed our own apathy and anxiety. It’s incredibly hard to be a source of stability for your congregation and community without tying your personal identity to it.”

### 4. We Long to Know We’re Making a Difference

Pastors also have a hard time gauging if they’re getting anywhere. “There are few milestones where you feel you’ve

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## Lutheran World Relief

### “Will I still carry water when I’m dead?”

Women slowly drag plastic jugs of water through a street in Nigeria. A bystander reflects on the scene, “The most difficult women to watch are the ones who have the cans tied to their ankles. They can barely walk, the cans so full and heavy, tripping them up and holding them back from the others.” The women are part of a performance called, “Will I Still Carry Water When I Am a Dead Woman?” created by Wura-Natasha Ogunji. It’s hard to watch, but far worse is the reality it hopes to highlight; women around the globe who spend 200 million hours a day collecting water. Lack of clean water is responsible for more deaths in the world than any war and half the world’s malnutrition cases are linked to chronic diarrhea, caused by lack of clean water, good sanitation and hygiene, including handwashing with soap. Scarcity of water is a global problem and a recent report by the World Bank finds that water scarcity “could hinder economic growth, spur migration and spark conflict.”

When you throw a pebble into a pond, you see the ripples emanate out from the point of impact. When you meet a community’s need for water, the ripple effect can be profound; more household income; improved nutrition, better health; more time; less conflict over scarce resources. Their communities are more stable and secure, and individuals and families are able to meet their potential.

Water imagery abounds in Scripture, from the Great Flood of Genesis to Revelation’s River of Life. All of god’s children deserve access to water—not only the healing spiritual waters of our faith, but also the actual, physical, life-sustaining stuff of raindrops and rivers here on earth. Your support makes it possible.



## Lutheran Disaster Response

### Healing wounds of war

The civil war in Syria has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and millions have had to flee the country. More than 80,000 refugees have been living in the Za’atari refugee camp in Jordan. More than half of them are children. These children have lost their homes; they’ve experienced war and witnessed violence and now live under difficult conditions with uncertain futures.

Not only are gifts to LDR working with the Lutheran World Federation, providing basic necessities of food, diapers, blankets, water, health and hygiene kits—your support is also helping provide psychosocial services for children—children like Lyla.

“I was very sad to leave my country, but we came here looking for safety,” 11-year old Lyla says. Lyla lost her father in the Syrian war. Her mother said they tried staying in Syria, but it was too dangerous. “I saw five men die right in front of me,” she recalls. Eventually the family left and found a new home in the Za’atari refugee camp.

“We thought going away was only for three months. We didn’t take anything, as the journey was long and dangerous, and now we are not able to go back,” Lyla says. She is one of many children taking part in the Peace Oasis, a psychosocial center supported in part by your gifts. The Peace Oasis supports youth and children like Lyla. It is a safe place for children to participate in activities such as drama, visual arts, games, group discussions and workshops on conflict mitigation skills. They learn how to better communicate, solve problems and build self-esteem.

Lutheran disaster response will continue to provide protection, shelter, education and basic necessities for refugees, especially children. With your prayers and financial support, we will work toward a future filled with hope and peace.

*Eternal rest grant them, O Lord, and may Light Perpetual shine upon them*

*Pastor Carlos Piiva 1950–2016*

*Pastor Susan Wolfe Devol 1955–2016*



arrived. It's nice when someone says 'good job' after a sermon, but what I want to say to them is 'If you want to let me know my work is fruitful open your heart to God.'

### **5. Many of Us Struggle Financially**

Several pastors commented on the practical realities of providing for a family on a ministry income. "Although we're a very transparent community, there are still things I wish people knew. Nobody knows the extreme financial burden my wife and I share. It's hard on our marriage because we barely make ends meet." Financial issues also bring pressures at church. "We can't dress too nice or drive a car that's too nice without feeling like members wonder how much we are paid. And I can't tell the church that my wife works as much as she does to help us dig out of overwhelming debt."

### **6. Church Life Can Be Hard on Our Kids**

Pastoral work can take its toll on the pastor's family. A pastor says, "I long for my family to be connected with church people in meaningful ways. I also know that it can be hard to connect with the pastor's family. My odd schedule can take a toll on my children. I want their social interactions at church to seem normal, but that can be hard. People have expectations of my family that I think are unrealistic. The thing 'I'm not telling' is that we are normal family-not super spiritual or holy, just normal."

### **7. This Work is Emotionally Draining**

The work of pastoring can weigh heavily on the heart of a pastor. "Your pastor isn't telling you that she sometimes fears she will have nothing to say for her sermon, that the anonymous letters from disgruntled members can be extremely painful, that letters of appreciation are kept in a special file for dark days in the ministry. Your pastor isn't telling you that she can't do it all, but she sometimes feels like the congregation expects her to do it all."

### **8. We Have Needs Too**

Pastors are three-dimensional beings with needs and interests of their own. When you do small things that let me know it's okay for me to rest, it reminds me that you care about who I am and not just what I do. And please choose the moments when you want my undivided attention carefully. On a Sunday morning or in the middle of a baby shower are not the times to vent or tell me something personal. Also, I have feelings, so please check your baggage before you hand it all to me."

### **9. We Are Often Lonely**

All these factors come together in the most common response I received from pastors: They are lonely. "At times parishioners confess things I can't even tell my husband. I will carry certain secrets to my grave—in particular, peoples' infidelities. This is one way to pray for a pastor, That God would help him or her carry others' pain. People who don't understand what our life is really like. There is always a loneliness. I think it just comes with the traditional clergy role, which is why I'm not in that role anymore." That sobered me. How many pastors are on the verge of leaving the ministry because of the pressures, expectations, and constant loneliness they feel?

Though there are many things pastors feel they can't tell their congregations, there is one big thing every pastor does share; the message of their own life of faith. Beyond their preaching or praying, the most powerful message they present to us is the example of a life lived by following God. Like all disciples, each pastor has a unique way of following Christ. God has gifted each congregation with the unique blend of traits embodied in their pastor. These are blessings the congregation may not see or appreciate. So while those in your congregation may not be fully aware of the common stressors each pastor deals with, remember that pastors are not called to be God but to model what it looks like to follow him. That's one truth you can be comfortable sharing with them.



## Lutheran Health Ministries of the Foothills By Parish Nurse: Elsie Ford, RN

Our own death is a subject most of us don't want to think about. It's common for people to say they want to "just go to sleep and not wake up." Although many people say they would prefer to avoid fruitless medical procedures and want to die at home rather than in a hospital attached to machines, our health system's default mode is to do everything possible to keep a patient alive, no matter the cost, financially, emotionally or spiritually. There are so many possible modern medical interventions it can become difficult to make decisions. It's important to think about, and discuss such matters *before* we need to make these decisions, and possibly before we're incapable of making them. Whether you want everything possible done to keep you alive or nothing at all, it is imperative that you spell out your wishes NOW in an advanced directive. The following discussion may help you determine your own wishes.

When we make decisions, we should weigh the possible benefits against the possible burdens. Sometimes people decide that the burdens outweigh any possible benefit and therefore refuse a treatment. Others feel that even a small potential benefit is worth the burden. People in previous generations have not had to make such decisions; the only option was to let nature take its course. Modern medicine now has ventilators, feeding tubes, CPR, etc, that may improve the chances of surviving a medical crisis but not provide any lasting benefit, and may, rather, prolong dying.

To begin thinking about end of life decisions, we need to first establish the *intended goal* of any proposed treatment. There are three possible goals: 1) cure, 2) stabilization, and 3) preparing for death. At times, these goals may be combined. For instance, a person with end-stage cancer may choose to treat pneumonia with antibiotics. The pneumonia may be cured but he/she will still have cancer. Or a goal may change as the patient's condition changes. After establishing the goal, the specifics of the treatments can be addressed.

*Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)* is standard procedure on all patients who have heart or breathing failure except for those with physician orders restricting its use. Notice that *physician orders* are required not to perform CPR. Advanced directives state only the patient's *wishes*. The physician must sign an actual order to not provide CPR. A form in use now is called POLST (physician orders for life sustaining treatment). If 911 is called, the paramedics will do everything possible to resuscitate the patient unless a POLST is present. There are risks to CPR. Ribs can be broken and a lung or spleen punctured. If the person has been without oxygen for too long he/she will suffer brain damage. Those with several medical problems, those who have a terminal illness, or those who are dependent on others for care survive CPR less than two percent of the time. About 15% of patients in hospitals who have CPR survive to be discharged. (Don't let these statistics deter you from learning CPR. For those who are otherwise healthy and receive CPR quickly, the survival rate is much higher.)

If a person's breathing fails, a machine called a ventilator or respirator may be used. Ventilators are commonly used during and after surgery. Sometimes they are needed with a severe illness such as stroke, pneumonia or heart failure. The machine has a tube which is inserted through the mouth and down the windpipe and then forces air into the lungs. This tube is uncomfortable and often a patient's hands need to be tied down to keep them from pulling at the tube. This is acceptable for most people because the ventilator is short-term. Would you want to be on a ventilator long-term? Some people would answer "yes" and

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## Health

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others “no.” You need to make that decision.

What about artificial feeding? There are several methods of “feeding” a patient who can no longer eat. Most of us are familiar with IVs that provide fluids. Nutrition can also be given directly into the bloodstream. This is called TPN. It is similar to an IV but is inserted into a large vein, usually in the chest. These go directly into the blood, bypassing the digestive system. Another method is through a mechanical device that is inserted through the skin and into the stomach. Nutrition, water and medications can then be poured or pumped into the stomach. Feeding tubes provide benefits to many people. They may be used short-term while a patient recovers from a stroke, or long-term, perhaps because of throat cancer and the inability to swallow. Frequently, however, a patient with a life-threatening condition or long-term chronic illness never regains the ability to eat or drink. Standard medical practice is to start tube feeding for anyone who can no longer take in enough food or water by mouth unless the patient or family makes a conscious choice not to do so. Feeding tubes are not without risk. If the tube becomes displaced, pneumonia can develop. Ulcers and infections can result. A patient who tries repeatedly to remove the tube may need to be restrained. Immobility can make them more susceptible to bedsores and stiff limbs. These patients can also be more isolated because they lose the personal interaction of someone sitting and providing them with a meal three times a day. Some people think of not using artificial means of feeding as starvation. Others see withholding artificial feeding as allowing a natural death to occur. The patient would actually suffer from dehydration long before suffering starvation. The medical evidence is clear that dehydration in the end stage of a terminal illness is a very natural and compassionate way to die.

Dialysis is a method of “cleaning” the blood when kidneys fail. Sometimes only a limited time on dialysis is needed while the body heals. However, for chronic kidney failure dialysis is a life-long need unless a kidney transplant occurs. Dialysis typically involves an hour or more at a dialysis center several times per week. The most common cause of death for patients using dialysis is heart disease or infection. The second most common cause is a decision to stop dialysis and die from kidney failure. Those people have decided that the burden of dialysis is greater than the benefit.

In the first part of the 1900s most deaths in the US were caused by infections like pneumonia. Antibiotics changed that so that now many infections can be cured. But toward the end of life, one may consider not using them to allow a natural and peaceful death to occur.

With these kinds of issues to consider, what can you do? First, **discuss the issues**. It’s best to have these discussions *before* a time of stress. Talk with your loved ones and your doctor. Second, **make an intentional decision**. You may want all life-prolonging measures. You may not want CPR. You may or may not want a feeding tube. And finally, **complete an advanced directive**. The value of an advance directive is that you think now about what you would want so that you aren’t forced to make a decision at a time of stress, and that you express your desires so that in the event you are unable to decide, your loved ones and doctor won’t have to guess what you would want. These are complex, emotion ridden issues. If you have any questions or difficulty deciding, please talk with me or your doctor. I am glad to help you with completing an advanced directive if you so desire.

Above all, pray about these things and remember that Christ gives us victory over death.



## Around St. Matt's



### “Noisy Coin Offering”

The “Noisy Coin Offering” continues to be a success and is taken on the third Sunday of every month and is received with great and

noisy enthusiasm.

Congregants are invited to save their coins and make a joyful “dump” with them into the metal pans circulated by the ushers.

The special offering is designated quarterly to a special charity. The first quarter of the year designated Ascencia of Glendale for the offering, the second quarter went to ELCA Disaster Relief and the third quarter to Burbank Temporary Aid Center. A total of \$.....was received from the third quarter’s offering for BTAC. The final quarter of the year will be designated for Lutheran Social Services.

### New members to be received on January 22

If you’ve been waiting for someone to invite you to join St. Matthew’s Church as a member...wait no longer. We’re a little shy and afraid of appearing “pushy” so maybe you thought we didn’t care but we do, we do!

If you’d like to become a bona fide member of the church please see Pastor Banwart and we’ll receive you into official membership on January 22, *Baptism of Our Lord Sunday*.



*Dear God, My prayer for 2017 is a fat bank account and thin body. Please don't mix these up like you did last year.*

### St. Matthew’s Church Council adds new face

The Annual Congregation Meeting was held after worship service on December 4. The first order of business was to elect two members to the Church Council replacing outgoing members Karen Deb and Alan Wilson. Marv Schoenrock and Ramona Rainey were unanimously elected to fill the open positions. Marv has served frequently on the council and was selected to be vice-chair of the new council. Ramona Rainey is new to council service but her enthusiasm and willingness to serve will be a gift along with her fresh new ideas.

The Council meets as needed but at least six times during the year.

The Council represents all members and congregants of the church and makes decisions on matters that affect everyone. You are encouraged to bring any matters, ideas, suggestions, complaints to any one of the council members. Your voice matters and the council is your voice.



**Council Members: Marv Schoenrock, Dalton Siirila, Janet Whitehead, Judy Dellinger, Fe Soriano, Ramona Rainey, Sandra Ogden**



## Matt's Mailbox

Dear Pastor Banwart,  
My family and I were surprised and honored to receive the Clarence Anderson Award in Dwight's behalf.

I remember many conversations we had about Minnesota since Clarence and we were from Minnesota.

I remember him as a friendly, dignified, and generous man who lived his faith throughout his life.

The church family at St. Matthew's welcomed him, and he was happy in his membership. He one invited Dwight and me to attend an AIDS awareness banquet. I sat next to a young man...maybe late 20's or early 30's. He was a Christian, well educated, and a pleasure to converse with. He had AIDS, and he died several months later. I felt so sad that such a young, promising man died so young.

Thank ou s much for sending the award to us.  
Sincerely, Sylvia Johnson and Dwight's family.

Dear Pastor Banwart,

I am so sorry to hear about your accident. My prayers are with you for a complete recovery. Thank you and dear friends at St. Matthew's for the birthday wishes. I really appreciate receiving the news letters. Most churches stop sending them after the pastor dies, but you continue to send them to me. I enjoy reading them. Please greet everyone at St. Matthew's.  
Sincerely, Sylvia Johnson

To my dear friends at St. Matthew's,

I send you my love and affection from the Pacific Northwest—land of the Seahawks! I miss you all! I miss the gatherings, the sermons, the celebrations and most of all my friendships. I have my cross and St. Francis statue in my den, so memories of you all dwell withn my walls here in Shelton—Christmas tree capital of the U.S. I may have only lived in Burbank for four years, but the friendships are with me for a lifetime! God's blessings,  
With much love , affection and joy,  
Tracy (Becht)

Dear Pr. Keith and St. Matthew's,

Thank you for your donation to Our Redeemer. We are planning to have a memorial bench on the patio to remember Ted.

Ted so enjoyed being on Synod Council with many memories there.

Thank you for being his friend.

Julie Jensen (wife of Ted Jensen who served for many years on the Synod Council)

Dear St. Matthew's Family,

For so many of us 2016 has been a year of challenges and change. As we all dealt with our issues it was comforting to know that our church family was always there...loving, lifting, supportive.

I am grateful beyond words to express how much it has meant to me knowing that you are my rock and anchor. Your prayers were there during a troubling illness to buoy me and your generous Christmas gifts and greetings humble me deeply.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for being the loving family that I never could have imagined.

I love you...each and every one!

Sandra (Ogden)

Dear Church Family:

thank you so much for the hugs, singing, and celebration of birthday and anniversary. Fifteen years! (That's the anniversary, NOT my birthday!)

I cannot possibly thank you enough for your love, support, and the dear friendships I have made at St. Matthew's. You are my family.

The beautiful silver treble clef necklace is a HIT! My coworkers and colleagues are asking, "Where did you get that?" Love it, love it, LOVE IT!

Thank you again, church family Love you all !

Melissa (Bridge, music director)

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your continued kindness in support of Burbank Temporary Aid Center. As always, your generous contribution of \$157.50 will directly impact the work we do. Because of you, we are able to provide the poor, working poor, and homeless of the ocal community with the basic services they need to live with dignity.....Thank you once again for helping us to fulfill our mission—it is truly appreciated! Wishing you the best, Barbara Howell, Executive Director.



## January, February, March Service Assistants

### Ushers & Greeters

1/1 Dalton/Sandra  
 1/8 Marv/Ramona  
 1/15 Dalton/Rein  
 1/22 Carolyn/Roberto  
 1/29 Ramona/Sandra  
 2/5 Marv/Rein  
 2/12 Dalton/Roberto  
 2/19 Carolyn/Marv  
 2/26 Ramona/Sandra  
 3/5 Dalton/Rein  
 3/12 Marv/Roberto  
 3/19 Ramona/Sandra  
 3/26 Carolyn/Rein

### Altar Guild

1/1 Carolyn Ordinary  
 1/8 Ramona Ordinary  
 1/15 Judy Ordinary  
 1/22 Barbara Ordinary  
 1/29 Pat Ordinary  
 2/5 Judy Ordinary  
 2/12 Carolyn Ordinary  
 2/19 Barbara Ordinary  
 2/26 Ramona Ordinary  
 3/5 Carolyn Purple  
 3/12 Barbara Purple  
 3/19 Ramona Purple  
 3/26 Judy Purple

### Counters

1/1 Janet & Judy  
 1/9 Marv & Bob  
 1/15 Judy & Rajeshh  
 1/22 Carolyn & Karen  
 1/29 Janet & Priya  
 2/5 Marv & Bob  
 2/12 Judy & Rajeshh  
 2/19 Carolyn & Karen  
 2/26 Janet & Priya  
 3/5 Marv & Bob  
 3/12 Judy & Rajeshh  
 3/19 Janet & Priya  
 3/26 Carolyn & Karen

### Acolyte

Daniel



### Communion Assistant

1/1 Bob T.  
 1/8 Mark  
 1/15 Karen  
 1/22 Bob T.  
 1/29 Sandra  
 2/5 Karen  
 2/12 Bob T.  
 2/19 Sandra  
 2/26 Bob T.  
 3/5 Dalton  
 3/12 Mark  
 3/19 Karen  
 3/26 Sandra

### Sound Engineer

Marv



**January:** Bob Bridge

**February:** Carolyn

**March:** Dalton

## Birthdays and Anniversaries in January, February, March

### **Birthdays:**

1/4 Leroi Tapongot  
 1/10 Catherine Austria  
 1/10 Steven Treece  
 1/10 Nikolas Whitehead  
 1/11 Renato Buenaventura  
 1/15 Alvina Federwitz  
 1/17 Owen Parsons-Woolf  
 1/20 Levie Allas  
 1/20 Marcel Crowder  
 1/20 Jay Erickson  
 1/20 Elizabeth Hoffman  
 1/22 Barbara DeBoer  
 1/22 David Federwitz  
 1/24 Daniel Ford, Jr.  
 1/25 Lynn Rothacher

1/27 Robert Ambrose  
 1/28 Peggy Manfredi  
 1/29 Teresa Espiritu  
 1/31 Martha Benitez  
 2/2 Rohin Deb  
 2/3 Cindy Davidson  
 2/3 Felix Tapongot  
 2/6 Carolyn Ambrose  
 2/14 Anthony Lipari  
 2/16 Davin Deb  
 2/16 William Lewis  
 2/18 Mark Steuer  
 2/19 Jennifer Scott  
 2/20 Bob Tadena

3/2 Josie Buenaventura  
 3/3 Robert Bridge  
 3/6 Noah Tualla  
 3/10 Mark Daniel Panahon  
 3/12 Daniel Bridge  
 3/13 Barbara Barnwell  
 3/15 Rebecca Murray  
 3/20 Mark Panahon, Jr.  
 3/22 Caleb Tualla  
 3/25 Marco Tualla  
 3/28 Alexandra Dixon

### **Anniversaries:**

1/7 Rudy & Neri Villarey  
 1/19 Bob & Melissa Bridge  
 1/28 Linden & Judy Hultquist  
 1/30 Peter & Aurora Steuer  
 1/31 Gilbert & Anjali Gomez  
 2/6 Craig & Lisa Murray





## Inspiration... "No Jacket Required"

I shook my head in disbelief. This couldn't be the right place. After all, I couldn't possibly be welcome here. I had been given an invitation several times, by several different people, and I had finally decided to see what this place was all about. But, this just couldn't be the right place.

Quickly, I glanced down at the invitation that I clutched in my hand. I scanned past the words, "Come as you are. No jacket required" and found the location. Yes, I was at the right place. I peered through the window again and saw a room of people whose faces seemed to glow with joy. All were neatly dressed, adorned in fine garments and appeared strangely clean as they dined at this exquisite restaurant.

Ashamed, I looked down at my own tattered and torn clothing, covered in stains. I was dirty, in fact, filthy. A foul smell seemed to consume me and I couldn't shake the grime that clung to my body. As I turned around to leave, the words from the invitation seemed to leap out at me... "Come as you are. No jacket required." I decided to give it a shot.

Mustering up every bit of courage I could find, I opened the door to this restaurant and walked up to a man standing behind a podium. "Your name, sir?" he asked me with a smile. "Jimmy D. Brown," I mumbled without looking up. I thrust my hands deep into my pockets, hoping to conceal their stains. He didn't seem to notice the filth that I was covered in and he continued, "Very good, sir. A table is reserved in your name. Would you like to be seated?" I couldn't believe what I heard! A grin broke out on my face and I said, "Yes, of course!" He led me to a table, and sure enough, there was a place-card with my name written on it in a deep, dark red. As I browsed over a menu, I saw many delightful items listed. There were things like, "peace," "joy," "blessings," "confidence," "assurance," "hope," "love," "faith," and "mercy."

I realized that this was no ordinary restaurant! I flipped the menu back to the front in order to see where I was at... "God's Grace," was the name of this place.

The man returned and said, "I recommend the 'Special of the Day'. With it you are entitled to heaping portions of everything on this menu." You've got to be kidding! I thought to myself. You mean, I can have ALL of this?! "What is the 'Special of the Day'?" I asked with excitement ringing in my voice. "Salvation," was his reply. "I'll take it," I practically cried out. Then, as quickly as I made that statement, the joy left my body. A sick painful ache jerked through my stomach and tears filled my eyes. Between my sobs I said... "Mister, look at me. I'm dirty and nasty. I am unclean and unworthy of such things. I'd love to have all of this, but, but, I just can't afford it." Undaunted, the man smiled again. "Sir, your check has already been taken care of by that Gentleman over there," he said as he pointed to the front of the room. "His name is Jesus."

Turning, I saw a man whose very presence seemed to light the room. He was almost too much to look at. I found myself walking towards Him and in a shaking voice I whispered, "Sir, I'll wash the dishes or sweep the floors or take out the trash. I'll do anything I can do to repay You for all this."

He opened His arms and said with a smile, "Son, all of this is yours if you just come unto me. Ask me to clean you up and I will. Ask me to allow you to feast at my table and you will eat. Remember, the table is reserved in your name. All you must do is accept this gift that I offer you."

Astonished, I fell at his feet and said, "Please, Jesus. Please clean up my life. Please change me and sit me at your table and give me this new life." Immediately, I heard the words, "It is finished."

I looked down and white robes adorned my body. Something strange and wonderful had happened. I felt new, like a weight had been lifted and I found myself seated at His table. "The 'Special of the Day' has been served," the Lord said to me. "Salvation is yours."

We sat and talked for a great while and I so enjoyed the time that I spent with Him. He told me, me of all people, that He would like for me to come back as often as I liked for another helping from God's Grace. He made it clear that He wanted me to spend as much time with Him as possible.

As it drew near time for me to go back outside into the "real world," He whispered to me softly, "And Lo, I am with you always." And then, He said something to me that I will never forget.

He said... "My child, do you see these empty tables?" "Yes, Lord. I see them. What do they mean?" I replied.

"These are reserved tables...but the individuals whose names are on each place-card have not accepted their invitation yet.

Would you be so kind as to hand out these invitations to those who have not joined us as yet?" Jesus asked.

"Of course," I said with excitement as I picked up the invitations. "Go ye therefore into all nations." He said as I turned to leave.

I walked into God's Grace dirty and hungry. Stained in sin. My righteousness as filthy rags. And Jesus cleaned me up. I walked out a brand new man...robed in white, His righteousness.

And so, I'll keep my promise to my Lord. I'll go. I'll spread the Word.

I'll share the Gospel... I'll hand out the invitations.

And I'll start with you.

Have you been to God's Grace?

There's a table reserved in your name, and here's your invitation... "Come as you are. No jacket required."



## **I was a stranger.....by Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton**

*I was a stranger and you welcomed me ... (Matthew 25:35).*

Today there are more than 60 million displaced people in the world, more than at any time since World War II. From Syria, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Somalia, Afghanistan and Colombia, people are fleeing for their lives from war, famine, gang violence, crushing poverty, drought and floods. Parents make the wrenching choice to send their children away with the hope that the possibility of a better life in a new country outweighs the violence of their home countries and the perils of the journey.

It seems the whole world is on the move.

Migration has been part of the story of the people of God from the beginning. Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, and God sent Abram and Sarai from their homeland to a new land. Joseph's brothers and father were refugees in Egypt. Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years after God liberated them from oppression and infanticide. The people of God suffered bitter exile in Babylon after they were forced from Judah by war and ethnic cleansing.

The memory of migration, forced exile, of being the stranger stayed with the people of God through the centuries and became part of their confession of faith: "... you shall make this response before the Lord your God: 'A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien ...'" (Deuteronomy 26:5).

The experience of God's people compelled Israel to give special care to the stranger. "When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:33-34).

Jesus also experienced forced migration. We read in Matthew 2:13-15 that the holy family fled for their lives from Israel into Egypt. And during the years of his earthly ministry Jesus had no permanent home. "And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head'" (Matthew 8:20).

Our Lord not only commended us to welcome the stranger, Jesus made it clear that when we welcome the stranger we welcome him.

Lately in our country there is a lot of anxiety about migrants and strangers. They are too often portrayed as a threat. They are the others. They need to be monitored. They don't belong here. This is *our* home. This is *our* country. We belong here.

When we look at the world in this way it isn't possible to see that we, too, are on a journey; we, too, were once no people; we, too, are only passing through. The author of Hebrews recounting the history of salvation makes this clear when speaking about our ancestors in faith:

"All these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one" (Hebrews 11:13-16).

We don't have a continuing home on earth. We are all migrants. Let us welcome the stranger, seeing him or her as a fellow traveler, a companion on the way.

And here's a song for the road:

*I fear in the dark and the doubt of my journey;  
but courage will come with the sound  
of your steps by my side.  
And with all of the family you saved by your love,  
we'll sing to your dawn at the end of our journey*



To the Pastors, Deacons, and People of the Southwest California Synod, ELCA,  
from Bishop Guy Erwin:

Dear friends, grace to you and peace in the Lord Jesus Christ!

A long, painful, and divisive presidential campaign has come to its inevitable end. Its outcome is certain to have excited and pleased some, and deeply, bitterly disappointed others-as indeed either outcome would have done. It should also be said that even within our church's congregations our spirits were sharply divided over this choice, almost certainly more so than many of us realized. We may look around ourselves at worship this Sunday and wonder how those next to us in the pews voted - even though California was less divided than the nation as a whole. We live in a sharply polarized nation, and there is no denying that division.

But now the election is over, and the work of living together-and governing the nation-goes forward. The two candidates themselves attempted to move beyond bitterness in the gracious words they addressed to each other after the outcome was clear. The peaceful transfer of power begins, as the outgoing president prepares to hand over the reins to the incoming one. But real and painful divisions in our society persist and may have been deepened by this election's outcome. Certainly the pain of those on the losing side is acute and will linger for a long time.

What can I say to you, as a Christian speaking to Christians, about what I saw in this campaign and what might lie ahead for us all? What can I say to you as your bishop, when you do not all agree with each other, or perhaps even with me? The best I can do is to call us-together-back to the faith we all profess, to the church into which we were all baptized, and in which we are all members of the Body of Christ. I call on each of us to remember and recommit ourselves to the unity in Christ that can transcend our differences, and to pray for each other-and to pray for peace and unity and understanding in our church and in our nation. We must also pray for the governing authorities, now and to come, that they may govern justly and for the well-being of all in society.

Pray for peace and unity-and keep working for justice. The commitment to love and serve our neighbor that Jesus taught us in the Great Commandment is not altered by a shift in the political winds. Nothing that was true or good or right on the day before this election has changed a whit on the day after-and this would have been true no matter who won. We may-we must-hold our political leaders to the standards and principles we ourselves hold, whether or not we voted for those leaders. It's harder to do this when in opposition, but even more urgent then to do so.

Protest injustice wherever you find it, whether those in power agree or not. We must protect the vulnerable and help those who need us: victims of racism, systemic and personal; victims of sexism, of sexual violence, gun violence, and bullying; victims of prejudice against foreigners, refugees, and those of other faiths; victims of homophobia and transphobia; and all those endangered by the fear or ignorance of others. These are our neighbors, and if our political leaders don't share our care for them, our responsibility to work for justice on their behalf just increases. We must use our talents, our voices, our resources, and even our bodies to continue to stand up for those who need us most.

One other thing seems clear to me: we must help the fearful in our communities see that the anxiety they may feel about their own uncertain futures is not relieved by scapegoating others or by indulging in conspiracy theories. But to do this we have to really listen to and truly hear those fears. The church should be a safe place for people to share what they feel in honesty and without fear of personal rejection. Even those captive to fear and prejudice are our neighbors, and need our help for their fears to be allayed. Churches in particular are magnets for the anxious, and for those seeking simple certainties in a complex, confusing world. So we have much to do; it is slow work; but it is part of our discipleship to care also for those neighbors whose fear distorts their trust.

So pray for peace; act for justice; show compassion for the fearful: Jesus calls us to follow him whether the path is smooth or stony. For many, it got much stonier on Tuesday. But holding on to each other as best we can, we can continue to move forward in faith. Confident that we serve a God whose justice is greater than human laws, whose providence sweeps away human schemes, and whose love is stronger than death, we must live in hope into the future God is preparing for us.

I ask you to keep me in prayers-as you are in mine-and I offer you my blessing in the name of our mighty and merciful God, our Savior Jesus Christ, and the ever-sustaining Holy Spirit. Amen. Guy November 9, 2016



# Prayer Calendar: January, February, March



- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Safe & Healthy New Year for All | 1 Gilbert & Anjali Gomez                  |
| 2 President Elect                  | 2 Rohin Deb                               |
| 3 Governor Brown                   | 3 Felix Tapongot                          |
| 4 Leroi Tapongot                   | 4 Cindy Davidson                          |
| 5 Presiding Bishop Eaton           | 5 SouperBowl of Caring                    |
| 6 Bishop Erwin                     | 6 Carolyn Ambrose                         |
| 7 Rudy & Neri Villarey             | 7 Craig & Lisa Murray                     |
| 8 Nikolas Whitehead                | 8 Burbank Temporary Aid Center            |
| 9 Cathleene Austria                | 9 LBT & Federwitz Missionaries            |
| 10 Steeve Treece                   | 10 Southwest California Synod             |
| 11 Renato Buenaventura             | 11 Immigration Refugee Service            |
| 12 English Ministry                | 12 Bishop Erwin                           |
| 13 Filipino Ministry               | 13 President .....                        |
| 14 Christian Unity                 | 14 Anthoy Lipari                          |
| 15 Alvina Federwitz                | 15 William Lewis                          |
| 16 Bob & Melissa Bridge            | 16 Davin Deb                              |
| 17 Owen Parsons-Woolf              | 17 Evangelical Lutheran Church of America |
| 18 Jay Erickson                    | 18 Our Pastor                             |
| 19 Marcel Crowder                  | 19 Jennifer Scott                         |
| 20 Levie Allas                     | 20 Pastor Bob Tadena                      |
| 21 Elizabeth Hoffman               | 21 Lutheran Maritime Ministry             |
| 22 Barbara DeBoer                  | 22 Lutheran Social Services               |
| 23 David Federwitz                 | 23 Phyllis Ainsworth                      |
| 24 Pastor Tom Ford                 | 24 California Lutheran University         |
| 25 Lynn Rothacher                  | 25 Armenian Ministry                      |
| 26 Linden & Judy Hultquist         | 26 Presiding Bishop Eaton                 |
| 27 Bob Ambrose                     | 27 Governor Brown                         |
| 28 Peggy Manfredi-Nielsen          | 28 California Supreme Court               |
| 29 Teresa Espiritu                 |   |
| 30 Peter & Aurora Steuer           |   |
| 31 Martha Benitez                  |   |

## March

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|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Repentance & Humility      | 11 Calif. Supreme Court     | 21 Armenian Ministry        |
| 2 Josie Buenaventura         | 12 Daniel Bridge            | 22 Caleb Tualla             |
| 3 Bob Bridge                 | 13 Barbara Barnwell         | 23 Music Ministry           |
| 4 Calif. Lutheran University | 14 Filipino Ministry        | 24 ELCA Disaster Relief     |
| 5 Presiding Bishop Eaton     | 15 Rebecca Murray           | 25 Marco Tualla             |
| 6 Noah Tualla                | 16 Solheim Lutheran Home    | 26 Alexandra Dixon          |
| 7 English Ministry           | 17 ELCA World Hunger        | 27 Lutheran Social Services |
| 8 President....              | 18 Lutheran Health Ministry | 28 Burbank Temp. Aid Center |
| 9 Montessori Academy         | 19 Bishop Erwin             | 29 Governor Brown           |
| 10 Daniel Panahon            | 20 Pr. Mark Panahon         | 30 LBT & Federwitz Family   |
|                              |                             | 31 Our Pastor               |



**MARCH 2017**

| Sunday  | Monday  | Tuesday  | Wednesday   | Thursday  | Friday  | Saturday   |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| <b>26</b><br><i>Transfiguration of Our Lord</i><br>9:00 AM English Bible Class/Choir<br>10:00 AM ENGLISH WORSHIP<br>11:15 AM Worship Committee<br>12:30 PM FILIPINO WORSHIP<br>2:00 PM Filipino Bible Study<br>3:00 PM Armenian Worship                           | <b>27</b><br>8:30 AM Men's Breakfast and Work-Morning<br>7:00 PM Armenian Choir & Youth | <b>28</b><br>11:30 AM Foothill Clergy<br>7:00 PM Women's Bible Study                       | <b>1</b><br><i>George Herbert</i><br>10:30 AM School Chapel<br>7:00 PM Ash Wednesday Worship  | <b>2</b><br><i>John &amp; Charles Wesley</i><br>7:30 PM English Choir                         | <b>3</b><br>7:00 PM Armenian Prayer<br>7:00 PM KOINONIA (Youth & Young Adult Group)                                   | <b>4</b><br>8:00 AM Organ Rehearsal<br>10:00 AM Filipino Choir                                     |
| <b>5</b><br><i>Lent 1</i><br>9:00 AM English Bible Class/Choir<br>10:00 AM ENGLISH WORSHIP<br>11:15 AM Fellowship Committee<br>12:30 PM FILIPINO WORSHIP<br>2:00 PM Filipino Bible Study<br>3:00 PM Armenian Worship  | <b>6</b><br>8:30 AM Men's Breakfast and Work-Morning<br>7:00 PM Armenian Choir & Youth  | <b>7</b>   | <b>8</b><br>10:30 AM School Chapel<br>12:30 PM Worship & Film Study<br>6:00 PM Soup Supper<br>7:00 PM Lenten Vespers                              | <b>9</b><br><i>Harriet Tubman &amp; Sojourner Truth</i><br>7:30 PM English Choir              | <b>10</b><br>7:00 PM Armenian Prayer<br>7:00 PM KOINONIA (Youth & Young Adult Group)                                  | <b>11</b><br>8:00 AM Organ Rehearsal<br>10:00 AM Filipino Choir                                    |
| <b>12</b><br><i>Bp. Gregory the Great of Rome</i><br><i>Lent 2</i><br>9:00 AM English Bible Class/Choir<br>10:00 AM ENGLISH WORSHIP<br>11:15 AM Congregation Council<br>12:30 PM FILIPINO WORSHIP<br>2:00 PM Filipino Bible Study<br>3:00 PM Armenian Worship     | <b>13</b><br>8:30 AM Men's Breakfast and Work-Morning<br>7:00 PM Armenian Choir & Youth | <b>14</b>  | <b>15</b><br>10:30 AM School Chapel<br>12:30 PM Worship & Film Study<br>6:00 PM Soup Supper<br>7:00 PM Lenten Vespers                             | <b>16</b><br>6:15 PM Churchmen's Dinner<br>7:30 PM English Choir<br>8:00 PM Men's Bible Study | <b>17</b><br><i>Bp. Patrick of Ireland</i><br>7:00 PM Armenian Prayer<br>7:00 PM KOINONIA (Youth & Young Adult Group) | <b>18</b><br>8:00 AM Organ Rehearsal<br>10:00 AM Filipino Choir                                    |
| <b>19</b><br><i>Lent 3/St. Joseph's Day</i><br><i>Noisy Offering Sunday</i><br>9:00 AM English Bible Class/Choir<br>10:00 AM ENGLISH WORSHIP<br>11:15 AM Catechism Class<br>12:30 PM FILIPINO WORSHIP<br>2:00 PM Filipino Bible Study<br>3:00 PM Armenian Worship | <b>20</b><br>8:30 AM Men's Breakfast and Work-Morning<br>7:00 PM Armenian Choir & Youth | <b>21</b><br><i>Bp. Thomas Crammer of Canterbury</i>                                       | <b>22</b><br><i>Johnathan Edwards</i><br>10:30 AM School Chapel<br>12:30 PM Worship & Film Study<br>6:00 PM Soup Supper<br>7:00 PM Lenten Vespers | <b>23</b><br>7:30 PM English Choir  | <b>24</b><br>7:00 PM Armenian Prayer<br>7:00 PM KOINONIA (Youth & Young Adult Group)                                  | <b>25</b><br><i>Annunciation of Our Lord</i><br>8:00 AM Organ Rehearsal<br>10:00 AM Filipino Choir |
| <b>26</b><br><i>Lent 4</i><br>9:00 AM English Bible Class/Choir<br>10:00 AM ENGLISH WORSHIP<br>12:30 PM FILIPINO WORSHIP<br>2:00 PM Filipino Bible Study<br>3:00 PM Armenian Worship  | <b>27</b><br>8:30 AM Men's Breakfast and Work-Morning<br>7:00 PM Armenian Choir & Youth | <b>28</b><br>11:30 AM Foothill Clergy<br>5:00 PM LHMF Board<br>7:00 PM Women's Bible Study | <b>29</b><br><i>Hans Nielsen Haug</i><br>10:30 AM School Chapel<br>12:30 PM Worship & Film Study<br>6:00 PM Soup Supper<br>7:00 PM Lenten Vespers | <b>30</b><br><i>John Donne</i><br>7:30 PM English Choir                                       | <b>31</b><br>7:00 PM Armenian Prayer<br>7:00 PM KOINONIA (Youth & Young Adult Group)                                  | <b>1</b><br>8:00 AM Organ Rehearsal<br>10:00 AM Filipino Choir                                     |



## Ask the Pastor by Pastor Keith Banwart, Jr.

### *Any words of wisdom for the coming New Year 2017?*

As I wrote in my Annual Report to the Congregation, 2016 was certainly not one of the best years on record for myself, or, from the stories that have been shared with me as a pastor, for many others either. Nonetheless, God was present and at work in and through each one of our lives in unique ways in 2016 and God promises to likewise be present and at work in 2017. While we may each hope and pray that 2017 will be a brighter year than 2016, most importantly, we know that, “all things work together for good for those who love the Lord, who are called according to the Lord’s purpose,” AND we know that, no matter what, the Lord will be with us in 2017... and always.

While Billy Graham has in the last days of his life, again, strayed too far into the political mix in our nation in my opinion, and while his son Franklin’s relentless political activities have tarnished the Graham “brand,” if you will, I still, at times, find inspiration from some of Billy’s earlier writings and sermons. Thus, let me share with you here “A Prayer For The New Year” penned by Billy Graham for The Saturday Evening Post a decade ago. Certainly, Billy did not have 2017 in mind when he penned these words; however, I believe they are just as appropriate today, if not more so:

“Our Father and our God, as we stand at the beginning of this new year we confess our need of your presence and your guidance as we face the future.

“We each have our hopes and expectations for the year that is ahead of us—but you alone know what it holds for us, and only you can give us the strength and the wisdom we will need to meet its challenges. So help us to humbly put our hands into your hand, and to trust you and to seek your will for our lives during this coming year.

“In the midst of life’s uncertainties in the days ahead, assure us of the certainty of your unchanging love.

“In the midst of life’s inevitable disappointments and heartaches, help us to turn to you for the stability and comfort we will need.

“In the midst of life’s temptations and the pull of our stubborn self-will, help us not to lose our way but to have the courage to do what is right in your sight, regardless of the cost.

“And in the midst of our daily preoccupations and pursuits, open our eyes to the sorrows and injustices of our hurting world, and help us to respond with compassion and sacrifice to those who are friendless and in need. May our constant prayer be that of the ancient Psalmist: “Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end” (Psalm 119:33).

“We pray for our nation and its leaders during these difficult times, and for all those who are seeking to bring peace and justice to our dangerous and troubled world. We pray especially for your protection on all those who serve in our armed forces, and we thank you for their commitment to defend our freedoms, even at the cost of their own lives. Be with their families also, and assure them of your love and concern for them.

“Bring our divided nation together, and give us a greater vision of what you would have us to be. Your word reminds us that: “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 33:12).

“As we look back over this past year we thank you for your goodness to us—far beyond what we have deserved. May we never presume on your past goodness or forget all your mercies to us, but may they instead lead us to repentance, and to a new commitment to make you the foundation and center of our lives this year.

“And so, our Father, we thank you for the promise and hope of this new year, and we look forward to it with expectancy and faith. This I ask in the name of our Lord and Savior, who by his death and resurrection has given us hope both for this world and the world to come. Amen.”

PS: In that same spirit of thankfulness and hopefulness, let me take a moment to thank you all for your kind remembrances, cards, prayers and gifts to the staff and myself this Christmas. Your generous partnership in this ministry which we call St. Matthew’s is a blessing to each one of us on the staff, and a blessing to many, many people both in Burbank/Glendale, and around the world. Thank you, and God bless you all in 2017.

Pr. Keith Banwart (on behalf of the entire staff of St. Matthew’s Church)



## News from our Filipino Congregation by Pastor Mark Panahon

### Saint Matthew's Filipino Ministry

We are about to end the year 2016. Time flies so fast. The world is excited to enter the year 2017. But we all do not know what lies ahead of us. Only God knows. This year 2016 was such a big year for us. There are so many memories behind us .. of happy moments of our loved ones and friends. In 2016 we've been through ups and downs in our lives. But thanks be to God for His wonderful Love, Grace and Mercy towards us.

Everything happens for a reason. In everything there is a season. Now is the season to remember the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. A season where the world is getting busy to buy gifts for their loved ones and friends. But do not forget Jesus is the Reason we Celebrate the Season!

We take this moment to thank the Lord for His unfailing Love and wonderful mercy. We want to thank the Ibay and Barranco families for their hospitality and the use of their home for our Christmas Potluck. We would like to thank all who participated in one way or another to make this event a great success. We are blessed to have you as a part of our Church Family.

Thank you all for the support you have given to the ministries of Miguel Aguilar and all other ministries we are partnered with. It's always a joy to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. To God be the glory!

We want to extend our thanks to Janet Whitehead and Thrivent for being a part of our Mission. Especially to Pastor Keith Banwart and to the council members and to Saint Matthew's Church. We really appreciate your continued prayer, love and support for the Filipino ministry.

The Koinonia of Saint Matthew's celebrated also their Christmas party held at the Fireside Room of St. Matthew's Church. Thanks to our Intern Pastor Davis "Bob" Tadana and to his family for helping and leading the Youth group.

On behalf of the Panahon family, we also want to give our warmest greeting for this season, MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR in CHRIST !

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Mark and Family



Filipino Congregation Christmas Party



Thrivent donation by Janet Whitehead for Miguel Aguilar ministry



**ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH  
A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLES**

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**Sunday Worship Schedule**

- 10:00 AM English Worship (with Children's Church)
  - 12:30 PM Filipino Worship
  - 1:30 PM Filipino Bible Study
  - 3:00 PM Armenian Worship
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