

THE MESSENGER

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR IS KICKED OFF AT STMAA

Fall programming started in earnest at St. Michael's over the last few weeks. On August 24th we had the annual Blessing of the Backpacks, where all teachers and youth volunteers were called forward to celebrate the beginning of the new school year. All teens who drive to school were also invited forward to have their car keys blessed. Families were treated to a back-to-school bash outside after the service, with a foam machine, food, and lots of kids' activities.



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LAUNCHING THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR



Back-to-school activities last month as part of this year's Blessing of the Backpacks and other ways to celebrate the beginning of the fall semester.



REFLECTIONS ON THE PSALMS WITH WAYNE MATHEWS



Starting on September 11th, a group of St. Michael's parishioners began a journey through the Psalms led by Wayne Mathews, a parishioner and a chaplain on our pastoral care team. The text for this class has been *Reflections on the Psalms* by C.S. Lewis. Writing as a layperson rather than a biblical scholar, Lewis examines the Psalms through the lens of literary criticism and personal faith experience.

The first two classes took a look at the musical influences of the Psalms, and how they've been used both in history and in contemporary worship. Music director Ken Walker led the class in an educational session where they gathered in the sanctuary and sang several Psalms together. Ken walked them through the various techniques used to chant them as a professional choir might.

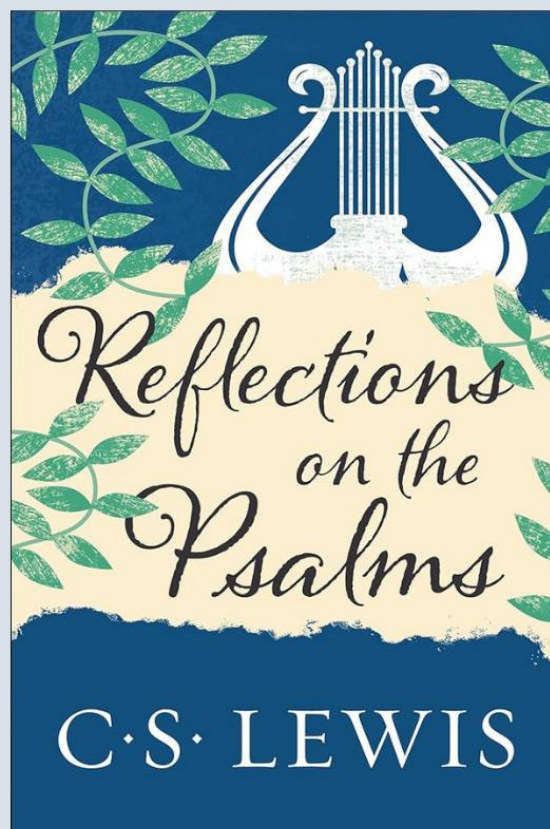
Future classes will focus on other interesting aspects of the Psalms.



REFLECTIONS ON THE PSALMS (cont.)

Lewis' book addresses the "cursing psalms" and their expressions of vengeance, suggesting they reflect honest human emotions that can lead to spiritual growth. He explores the nature of praise, arguing that all enjoyment naturally overflows into praise. Lewis also examines the Psalms' approach to nature, death, and suffering, finding in them a unique blend of earthy realism and spiritual transcendence. Throughout, Lewis emphasizes the Psalms as poetry that speaks to universal human experiences while maintaining their distinctly Hebrew character. He argues that the Psalms offer both comfort and challenge to modern readers, serving as a bridge between ancient worship and contemporary faith.

Classes are Thursday evenings from 6 pm-7:30 pm in the Bingham classroom. You need not have attended every session in this course, and Wayne is a great teacher, so there's nothing stopping you from joining in!



EXPERIENCING GOD

EXPERIENCING GOD BY PRACTICING MATANA

by Julie Parmenter

About a year ago, the Experiencing God Bible study group, which meets on Thursday mornings in the Bingham Classroom, started exploring the idea of an outreach project. We considered several possibilities and decided that money was something we could share and that would do the most good, and that this should be a method conforming to the Hebrew idea of *matana*, meaning a gift given freely, without restriction or expectation.

We decided that anyone who wanted to could collect money – loose change or bills – in a jar and express gratitude as they did for their own prosperity. Thus, the Gratitude Jars project started. We have had an ingathering of money several times, and the proceeds are given to the church's Clergy Discretionary Fund for distribution to people who are facing financial difficulty or emergency.

Hundreds of dollars have been raised by this ministry so far. The jars help us to focus on the spiritual discipline of gratitude, appreciating the good in our lives and giving freely to those who look to the Saint Michael's community for help and support.



EXPERIENCING GOD (cont.)

Deacon Suzi Drury wrote this prayer to encourage us:

Loving God,
I struggle with the practice of giving to others
and to be an example of Jesus and his disciples.
As I place coins in my gratitude jar,
I am your servant, Lord, and pray for all those in need.
May Jesus be present as I pursue His path
of humble service to others who ask for help.
May my action be a blessing for all. Amen.

If you are interested in supporting the Clergy Discretionary Fund, you may donate through the church's web site (stmaa.com/give) or by dropping bills in the collection plate on the first Sunday each month which is dedicated to the fund.



SAFE CHURCH TRAINING 2025

By Addrianne Conway

We had an in-person Safe Church training at St Michael's on September 20th, thanks to Karen Schlabach. The Diocese of Kansas offers this training as part of its commitment to providing a safe place for all people to share in God's love and celebrate the joy of following Jesus Christ. It was well attended with 30 people coming in for training from St. Michael's, St. Aidan's, St. Thomas and St. Margaret's.

If any parishioners ever have a chance to attend an in-person training class, it is highly recommended. We had great conversation and sharing of ideas which helped the group understand the material. However, for anyone who missed it but needs certification, the diocese does offer online training.

To be set up to take online Safe Church training, send an e-mail to Michael Funston, mfunston@episcopal-ks.org. Include your name, email, parish, and role.



OKTOBERFEST FALL FESTIVAL

AN INVITATION FROM HORIZONS ARTS MINISTRY

Oktoberfest Fall Festival

Sunday, October 26, 4-6 pm
Spencer Hall



Come hear Festhaus Musikanten Band (polkas, waltzes, marches, and children's songs) and dine on German fare (child friendly items included) prepared by Chef Bob and the Kitchen Angels, on October 26.

This annual event has activities for the whole family. Freewill donations will be gratefully accepted.

We are inviting families of the Summer Arts Camp (more than 15 elementary schools in the community) as our guests.

Please come join the fun!

This event is sponsored by Horizons Arts Ministry.



FAITH AND FIREARMS: TURNING FAITH INTO ACTION

Parishioners are invited to join with others at the Grandparents for Gun Safety 12th Annual Community Forum

Monday, October 13 at 6 p.m.
Arrupe Auditorium on the campus of Rockhurst University
5351 Forest Avenue, KCMO

National activist, pastor, and author John Pavlovitz is the keynote speaker. A panel of local faith leaders will also share their gun violence prevention actions.

Rev. Kelly Isola, Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council, will moderate a panel including Dr. Amy Harris Hartsfield, Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church; Rev. Jenny Wells, Central Presbyterian Church; Rev. Dr. Chris Wilson, St. Andrew Christian Church; and Bryon K. Williams, lead organizer for Wyandotte County Churches United for Justice.

Click [here](#) for the link to the 12th Annual Community Forum to learn more and sign up to attend as a

- Sponsor, to meet Pavlovitz and other VIPs at the Patron Reception
- Caring Community group, with 10 discounted tickets for congregations, nonprofits, organization members, or group of friends
- Single ticket buyer



FAREWELL TO RYAN BLOYD-WISEMAN

CHURCH SENDS BEST WISHES IN NEW CHAPTER IN RYAN'S CAREER

Last month we celebrated our youth and family minister Ryan Bloyd-Wiseman, who has moved to Kentucky with her husband. There she will be leading an ECUSA parish as the next chapter in her career.

Ryan was ordained at the Bishop Kemper Seminary last year, and served as the youth minister and leader of our youth programming for over four years. During her final Sunday with us she preached for one last time to the flock, and we had a celebration in her honor in Spencer Hall afterward.

We hope Ryan will stay in touch and we appreciate all her work here.



Best of luck to Ryan in all her future ministries!