

THE MESSENGER

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

LOOKING AHEAD TO HOLY WEEK: MAUNDY THURSDAY AS AN INVITATION TO GOD'S BIG TABLE



By Kaylen Simpson-Porto

I grew up in an evangelical, non-denominational, spirit-filled church. My father is an ordained pastor. In fact, my parents met because of the Jesus movement in a Houston coffee shop where my upbringing was practically set in stone.

(turn to p. 2 for the continuation of Kaylen's article on Maundy Thursday)

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MAUNDY THURSDAY, cont'd.

My childhood home was often filled with “strangers” attending our holiday festivities when they had nowhere else to go. My father even led several Seder dinners over the years--preserving the importance of the Jewish story into our non-Jewish lives.

I give all of this context to paint the picture that The Last Supper was not something mentioned a couple of times in a Sunday school lesson. It was a lesson my parents attempted to weave and embody within the fabric of our family. Yet, on Maundy Thursday in 2025 here at St. Michael's I encountered a meaning that was never made as clear as it was that night.

As the vestments were taken off, candles blown out and removed, beautiful vibrant cloths stripped, silence kept; the Holy Spirit was awakening a new understanding within me:

- Jesus came to feed us.
- Jesus came to strip all of the unnecessary things away.
- Jesus came to welcome us to their bigger table.

I wept as the immense beauty of that invitation washed over me. Then I wept that we often try our hardest to make our tables small.

- Exclusive.
- Curated.
- Ornate.
- Instagram worthy.

I spent about an hour crying out to God; confessing my own sin, and our corporate American-exceptionalism sin, of building smaller tables. How could I?

How could we-accept an invitation to salvation and yet reject an invitation to the grandest feast of all?

MAUNDY THURSDAY, cont'd.

So this Lent, instead of giving something up, I chose to focus on the length of and the invitations I make to my table. I am asking myself questions like:

- Who have I excluded from an invitation and why?
- What fears hold me back from lengthening my table?
- What am I missing out on when I let fear, prejudice, or perfectionism have power?
- What expectations do I hold for my guests? Are they aligned with God's?
- How can I grow closer to God through communion with God's people?

I invite you to join me at the Maundy Thursday service this year and to ask yourself these or similar questions as you prepare your heart for Holy Week.

I leave you with a prayer:

*O God, whose table is welcome to all, forgive us for the ways we limit your invitation both in our own lives and to others. Teach us to build longer tables, to see our neighbors as you see them--worthy of invitation--and to extend our hands and hearts to all people through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.***



ALTAR GUILD NEWS

By Addrianne Conway

We are grateful for Corey Graham, a longtime member of St. Michael and All Angels, who assisted the Altar Guild on Sunday, February 15. Corey is partnering with Donna Burchfield on Altar Guild.

Corey shared that he feels truly blessed to have the opportunity to serve and to deepen his connection to our church community. We are thankful for his willing spirit and faithful presence among us.

The Altar Guild is a sacred, welcoming ministry that works prayerfully behind the scenes of every service, preparing and tending to the holy details that make our worship meaningful and beautiful. If you've ever been curious about the inner workings of our services and feel called to serve in a quiet but powerful way, we warmly invite you to join us on Sundays in the sacristy at 9:15. Come be part of this faithful and reverent ministry.



PARISH YOUTH OUT IN THE WORLD

The latest installment of updates from folks who've come through our youth program in recent years. For this edition we feature news from Bethany Senuta and John Butler.



BETHANY SENUTA

Bethany Senuta graduated a few years ago from New Trier High School in suburban Chicago. While there she was part of the national champion regatta team. Today she's very active in rock climbing and enjoying the "Denver scene" in... Denver, Colorado.

JOHN BUTLER

John graduated from Pembroke Hill. Since then he's studied urban planning at the University of Pittsburgh, where he is on the Dean's List. He enjoys working out a lot and is "kicking around the idea of moving back to the KC area." He's involved in equitable housing organizations, and regularly attends an ECUSA parish in Pittsburgh.



EEI SERIES FEATURES EQUALITY + INCLUSION DIALOGUE

From the STMAA EEI team

The STMAA EEI team (“Episcopalians for Equality and Inclusion” have put together an informative program that’s open to all parishioners this spring, where we’ve talked about how as followers of Christ, our love and empathy will help us find a path of mutual understanding, respect and acceptance of ALL voices in the church community.

LGBTQIA+ people are not always valued. Fear, ignorance and discrimination against our LGBTQIA+ brothers and sisters have long been a part of the Church and has diminished and silenced voices that must be heard.

Therefore, as followers of Christ, it is our responsibility to ensure that all voices are heard, all welcome to the table and that we provide spiritual empowerment, visibility and all-inclusive love to the LGBTQIA+ community and not only welcome them, but embrace, support and protect them with Gods love.



EEL, cont'd.

What do we hope to accomplish during this program?

- Understanding
- Knowledge - what do the letters and flags mean?
- Communication - the courage to have difficult conversations
- Acknowledgement - seeing each other is support and respect
- Advocacy
- Support

Schedule of Spring 2026 programs

February 22 - The More You Know: Terminology and Pride Flags

March 1 - Sex, Gender Identity and Rock and Roll

April 26 - If You Forget the Past... From Stonewall to Gay Marriage - and how far we have to go

May 3 - WWJD - Christianity and Acceptance

All programs are held in the Bingham Room after the 10AM service



A SEASON OF RENEWAL FOR FR. DAVID AND OUR PARISH

Fr. David has served among us since 2013 and as our Rector since 2019, and we are deeply grateful for his faithful ministry. Because of this long, shared life together, the Vestry believes now is the right time to begin planning for a season of renewal for him and for our parish.

The timing and length of the time away would be approximately four months in 2027. Fr. David would take a clergy renewal sabbatical, stepping away from day-to-day responsibilities for a dedicated time of rest, prayer, learning, and reconnection with God, family, and vocation.

A grant proposal has been submitted to the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program which provides grants to congregations to underwrite both the pastor's renewal activities and congregational renewal while the pastor is away. This is a competitive process and, if we are successful, Saint Michael's will have the opportunity not only to support Fr. David's renewal journey, but also to imagine how God might renew all of us in the years ahead as the grant would help fund not only Fr. David's time away, but also guest clergy, parish events, and opportunities for our community to grow during this season.

The Grant Process and Timeline

The program is administered by Christian Theological Seminary, which receives proposals from congregations one year before the planned sabbatical. For sabbaticals beginning in 2027, applications are due in March 2026, and congregations learn the results near the end of the summer 2026. A small parish committee, together with Fr. David, worked to complete the grant proposal. The application includes developing a rationale and design for the proposed sabbatical; providing a picture of our parish through both a historical lens as well as current ministries; and creating a budget that will support both Father David's renewal activities and those of the parish.

CLERGY RENEWAL PROGRAM, cont'd.

If a grant is awarded, the details of the 2027 sabbatical year will be clarified, including coverage for worship and pastoral care and ways to celebrate both the sending and the return.

We are all a part of this. This is not just Father David's sabbatical—it is an invitation for our entire parish to enter a season of renewal together. The Clergy Renewal Program emphasizes that pastors and congregations design these experiences in partnership, so all of our voices are essential.

We will not be waiting until next year to begin this journey. Please pray for Father David and for our parish, reflect on where you sense God at work in your own life, and watch for invitations to conversations, listening sessions, and discernment gatherings in the months ahead. Together, we trust that this season—both the preparation and the sabbatical itself—will be a gift of renewal for Fr. David, for our parish family, and for the wider community we are called to serve.

**Respectfully submitted by the
Renewal Grant
Proposal Committee.**

**Linda Brown, Wayne Matthews,
Bob Barton, Leslie Malle, Jaime
Keltner, Margareta Knopic, Ken
Walker, and Addrianne Conway.**



REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR 2026 MEGA CAMP

By Beth Lee

At Mega Camp 2025, we had 16 campers and 5 adult Episcopal volunteer staff from St. Michael's. The Mega Camp theme was "Another Way." It was a meaningful and fun week for all! A huge thank you to Jillian Carroll, Lindsay Hill, Kirsten Lee, Leslie Malle, and Margaret Thompson for serving on staff and for your dedication to the youth in the diocese!

Young Episcopalians (and their friends) have been attending camp at Camp Wood YMCA the first week of June for over 80 years. Ask some senior members at STMAA and hear stories about what their camp experience was like years ago.

Some of the traditions have changed slightly and the camp has made some big improvements (new air-conditioned cabins, new shower house, large, shaded pavilion just to name a few), but the essence of Episcopal summer camp is still the same.



**Episcopal
Summer**

MEGA CAMP

Join us for a week full of fun activities,
meaningful connections, and worship!

May 31-June 6, 2026
3rd-12th Graders
@ Camp Wood YMCA

edokformation.wordpress.com/camp
Registration opens January 1!



EPISCOPAL MEGA CAMP 2026

What do our youth get out of camp? Faith formation through worship, music, prayer, and small group discussion; lifelong friendships that grow during childhood and beyond; outdoor fun in God's creation (archery, climbing tower, horseback riding, swimming, arts and crafts, canoeing, kayaking, giant swing...); and an amazing camp experience provided by caring, loving Episcopal volunteer staff.

A blog is written daily to share the scriptures discussed and activities for each age group: <https://edokformation.wordpress.com/>

When: May 31-June 6, 2026

Where: Camp Wood YMCA, Elmdale, KS

Who: Students in grades 3-12 for 2025-26 school year (you must have finished third grade to attend); Camp is not restricted to Episcopalians or regular churchgoers. All are welcome, so feel free to invite friends and family.

Cost: \$550 through May 1, 2025; \$600 after May 1.

There is a \$25 non-refundable deposit due at registration.

Registration: Priority deadline is May 1. [Register by clicking here.](#)

Scholarships: Available to apply for via the registration form.



SPONSOR A ST. MICHAEL'S YOUTH AT MEGA CAMP

By Beth Lee

You can sponsor a St. Michael's youth (3rd-12th grade) who wants to go to Episcopal Mega Camp (May 31st–June 6th). The cost to go to Mega Camp is \$550. Our goal is to make camp affordable for all youth at STMAA who would like to attend. Not only will we be telling young families how important camp can be for faith development of our youth but also build intergenerational relationships between our youth and the adults (you) at St. Michael's.

You may be asking, "What do I need to do, if I want to sponsor a STMAA youth who is going to camp?"

1. Pray for the youth(s) you would like to sponsor that they will have an amazing week full of fun activities, faith formation, and building lifetime friendships with peers while being surrounded by Episcopal volunteers.
2. Write a note to be received the week of camp by the youth you have agreed to sponsor. You can just say you hope they have a great week and that you are praying for them. You can even share a camp memory from when you were younger, your favorite hobby (reading, cooking, hiking, traveling, watching sports...), why your faith is important to you, or why you are glad they decided to go to camp.
3. Contribute \$100 toward the cost of their week at camp, so that the youth can attend camp for \$450. This will not only make it easier for families with multiple youth who would like to attend but will also send a message to all families with youth that we value our young people and want them to have this opportunity to grow their faith, build wonderful friendships, and enjoy God's amazing creation. You can make your contribution online at: <https://bit.ly/STMAACampSponsor>

If you are interested in sponsoring a St. Michael's youth, please contact Beth Lee at leefamily93@gmail.com or 816-582-8707.

CHILI COOK-OFF 2026

Last month the parish had a blast at the annual chili cook-off. Bingo was played, and the competition even featured some highlights like adults asking for numbers to be repeated. (The answer from our youth officiants was a somber, “Numbers and letters will not be repeated.”)

The food was delicious once again. This year third place went to Pat Loriaux. Second place was Matt Downing with kids Barrett and Avery. First place went to the Keltners, with Jaime, Jeff, Abbey and nephew Riley Kern. (pictured below, left to right)

Abbey and Riley were the star bingo “officiants.”

